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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR AND EEB
TREASURY FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS - ROSE

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TAGS: [EFIN](#) [EAID](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: ERDOGAN'S GAP PLAN - LONG ON RHETORIC, SHORT ON
DETAIL

Classified By: Economic Counselor Dale Eppler for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. During a May 27 visit to Diyarbakir, Prime Minister Erdogan turned an official speech into a two-hour political rally. His aim was to detail plans to complete the Southeast Development Project (GAP, in Turkish). After 90 minutes of platitudes about his administration's contributions to the Southeast over the last five years, Erdogan finally got down to the plan's content: improve infrastructure; build more dams, irrigation, and power plants; offer money to keep kids in school; promote tourism potential; double incomes in the Southeast; fight terrorism; increase the importance of NGOs, universities, and think tanks in promoting development; offer low-cost loans to farmers; and provide a Turkish Radio and Television channel for regional (Kurdish) languages. The GAP project will cover nine of the poorest provinces in Turkey, providing jobs to 3.8 million people, and bringing USD 12 billion of new investment, according to Erdogan. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) Before an estimated crowd of 2,000, Erdogan spoke for two hours while surrounded by his key economic ministers: Treasury, Industry, Agriculture, Energy, Finance, Health, and Transportation, and two deputy prime ministers: Nazim Ekren (Economic Affairs) and Cemil Cicek (Government spokesman and chair of the anti-terrorism council). According to press reports, Erdogan had previously snubbed DTP, pro-Kurdish Democratic Societal Party, members in Ankara, and Osman Beydemir, the DTP mayor of Diyarbakir, did not attend the rally..

¶3. (SBU) Erdogan pledged support for the region in four main areas:

Economic development: projects to construct "attraction centers" or trade zones in Gaziantep and Sanliurfa; a pledge to double incomes in the Southeast over five years to bring them more in line with Turkey's USD 9,300 national average; develop the region's ecotourism potential and general tourism infrastructure; expand border trade and industrial zones; offer trade credits and incentives to small- and medium-sized companies; provide incentives for organic farming and erosion control systems; offer seed support and loan repayment delays to farmers; and boost electricity production to 27 million KWH annually.

Social development: educational incentives paid directly to mothers to keep their children in primary and secondary school, with premium payments for girls to study; provide job training to 35,000 unemployed; and a promise to build more hospital beds and universities. Erdogan also vowed to fight against terrorism in the region on every front.

Infrastructure improvement: projects to complete the airport terminal at Batman; build seven more dams (from 15 to 22); provide irrigation to 1.9 million additional hectares; build ten new power plants (from 9 to 19); move GAP development headquarters from Ankara to the region; and provide an update on these projects four times each year.

Enhancement of institutional capacity: he spoke of spending on unnamed regional and sectoral incentives and local and regional organizations.

Atmospherics

15. (C) Erdogan spoke for 120 minutes with great fervor. The first hour was a patriotic pep rally, with much talk of one nation, one flag, one republic, and one state--democratic and secular, with no ethnic division. The audience cheered and chanted frequently as he spoke about the fight against terrorism and the energy of the people. Fifteen minutes into the speech, he took off his jacket, which made the entire address seem more like a political campaign rally than a GOT event. Panned shots of the audience showed less than 10% of the estimated 2,000 attendees were women, and Erdogan did not mention the important role of women in Turkey until ninety-five minutes into his address.

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WILSON